

185  
1036  
97  
11

south side of the Rappahannock river, a few miles above the present village of Belfield, where he held a large landed estate. They left many children, with all of whom I was well acquainted when I was young: but I know very little now of their descendants.

The third daughter of Colonel Joseph Gray was called Ann. She married a Mr. Blount, of the County of Southampton, who she survived and afterwards married a Mr. Blow of the same County. She survived her second husband also and then married a third time Mr. Mills Godwin of Cheekatuck in the County of Hansemond. By her first husband, Blount, she had one child, a son, Henry Blount, who I remember as a student of law in my father's office, when I was very young. He died, as I have understood, unmarried. His mother had no children by either of her two last marriages.

The fourth daughter of Colonel Joseph Gray was called Martha. She married a Mr. Newsom, a respectable merchant of the town of Petersburg. They both died before I was born, leaving an only child, a son, William Newsom. With him I was very well acquainted. He married and removed to Norfolk, where he held some property. When I came to Norfolk to reside, I found him living in the County of Princess Ann, which County he then represented in the Virginia Assembly. During the administration of Mr. Jefferson, he was appointed Post-master of Norfolk, an office which he held for many years. But having lost his wife, by whom he had two sons, both then married, they all removed to the State of Tennessee. There he married a second time, as I have heard, but I know nothing more of him or his descendants.

The fifth and youngest daughter of Colonel Joseph Gray was called Lucy. She married Col. John Flood Edmunds, a very respectable gentleman who resided in the County of Brunswick. They left many children, I believe. But with the exception of their eldest, a daughter, who I recollect as a visiter at my father's house, while he lived in Williamsburg, I never was acquainted with any of them. I have good reasons for believing, however, that the descendants of Colonel Edmunds are numerous and very respectable in the County

of Brunswick even at this day, although I know none of them.

This is all I think it necessary to say here concerning the descendants of Colonel Joseph Gray the father of my paternal grandmother.

Littleton Tazewell lived but a few years after his marriage and died March 17<sup>th</sup> 1757. His remains are deposited in the present county of Greensville on the estate he formerly held there situated about four miles from the present village of Belfield on the Otterdam Swamp. This was then a part of the county of Brunswick and hither my grandfather removed during his life disliking his first residence which was situated on the Potomac river in what is still a part of that county. My father during his life sold both these estates.

After the death of my grandfather my <sup>mother</sup> grandfather married a second time the Rev. William Fanning a learned, worthy, pious, and good man, by whom she had issue a single child a daughter called Drayc Smith Fanning. I was brought up with her she was a few months younger than myself, and I felt for her the affection of a brother. When she grew up she married John Wickham esq: of the city of Richmond and dying left two William Fanning Wickham and Edmund Fanning Wickham whom I now regard and value as the nearest connexions I have except my own children.

Littleton Tazewell died intestate. At his death he left two children Henry Tazewell and Sarah Tazewell. Of these Sarah died soon after her father an infant of tender years and without issue.

Of Littleton Tazewell himself altho' he lived in times comparatively recent I have been able to collect less information than of any other of my ancestors. The nature of his office would have excluded him from all others if in other respects he might have aspired to such. And his rapid transitions and frequent changes of residence during his short life gave but little opportunity for any to become well acquainted with him. His youth was spent in Williamsburg in the Secretary's office there; his early manhood in Northampton County in the study of the law, and his last four years in Brunswick and during his short residence here he changed his place of abode. All I have ever heard of him was from my grandmother his wife who used to say he was a very industrious, worthy, good man, much devoted to his family but carried off so frequently from them by his business that he spent but little of his time at home during the short period of their marriage.

VI. Henry Tarzwell.

Henry Tarzwell, the only son of Littleton Tarzwell and of Mary Gray his wife, was born in the County of Brunswick, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of November 1753. His father died, intestate, when Henry Tarzwell was quite young, leaving two children, himself and a younger sister called Sarah. She did not survive their father long, and died an infant. In consequence of these events, the whole estate of Littleton Tarzwell devolved upon Henry Tarzwell his sole surviving child.

This estate consisted of two plantations in the County of Brunswick, with all the necessary slaves, stocks &c for their proper cultivation. One of these plantations, that on which Henry Tarzwell was born, was situated on the south side of Notts way river. The other, to which his father afterwards removed and where he died, was situated on the Otterdam swamp, on the north side of Meherrin river, four or five miles below the present village of Belfield, then called Hicks's ford. Both these plantations were afterwards sold by Henry Tarzwell, when he purchased estates in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg. The former, to a Mr. Mason, I think; and the latter to Colonel Benjamin Harrison of Brandon.

After the death of his father, Henry Tarzwell was placed under the guardianship of his <sup>maternal</sup> grandfather Colonel Joseph Gray, of whom I have already spoken. By this guardian, he was sent to school put under the tuition of a Mr. Satter, an Englishman, who <sup>Drum</sup> <sup>next</sup> school, then much celebrated, in the County of Surry, near Colonel Allen Coche's, with whom Henry Tarzwell was boarded. This mansion of Colonel Coche, of late years, has been called Bacon's Castle.

Under the tuition of this Mr. Satter, Henry Tarzwell learned to read, to write and to cipher. He wrote an excellent hand and was a good accountant. I have often heard him say, that all Satters scholars were remarkable for writing well and being good accountants. It was this saying of his, probably, which, when I began to practice the law, caused me to notice that the handwriting of all

Students from this region was unusually good. An observation, the <sup>ap.</sup> about which I have had occasion to witness often since; and which <sup>his</sup> <sup>plan,</sup> <sup>is</sup> the lasting effects of early habits and association and <sup>Drum</sup> <sup>next</sup> <sup>school</sup> <sup>near</sup> <sup>Colonel</sup> <sup>Allen</sup> <sup>Coche's</sup> <sup>mansion</sup> <sup>has</sup> <sup>been</sup> <sup>called</sup> <sup>Bacon's</sup> <sup>Castle</sup>.

97  
While he was at this school, his mother married the Reverend William Fanning; and Colonel Gray, his grandfather and guardian, dying soon afterwards, Henry Tazewell was then placed under the guardianship of his step-father - Mr. Fanning, was a very worthy man, who had been well educated himself, and having no child of his own, he became much attached to his step-son and ward. By Mr. Fanning, Henry Tazewell was soon removed from Satter's school, and placed under the tuition of a Mr. Gordon, to learn Latin and Greek. Gordon was a Scotchman, who kept a Grammar school in the County of Surry, at Swan's Point, near Mount Pleasant, the mansion of Colonel Hartwell Coche, with whom Henry Tazewell boarded.

Mr. Gordon was thought to be an excellent tutor of boys. This character of him I have often heard from his pupils, with many of whom I afterwards became acquainted. And that such was the opinion of my father and grandfather, is certain. In the year 1783, they united in a very strong application to Mr. Gordon, who was then established in Smithfield, requesting him, earnestly, to come to Williamsburg, to superintend my early classical studies. But he declined this application upon the ground of his advanced years.

Henry Tazewell soon became a great favourite of his tutor, as I have often heard from his schoolfellows of that day. Mr. Gordon bestowed upon him unusual attention, so much indeed as to bring as upon the old man, from the other scholars, the charge of partiality to this favourite pupil. Of this partiality, if it really existed, Henry Tazewell was prudent enough to profit, I suppose. His progress in this school must have been very rapid, for about the beginning of the year 1770, he was taken from it and placed by his guardian Mr. Fanning at the College of William and Mary, then the most distinguished Seminary of learning, probably, in any of the British Colonies in America, and certainly the most so of any in the Southern Colonies.

Henry Tazewell continued at William and Mary until sometime in the year 1772. During this winter passed through all the classes established there considered by his guardian Mr. Fanning (a

judge) as sufficiently qualified to commence the  
law. He was, therefore, removed from college and placed as  
student in the office of his uncle Mr. John Tazewell, who was  
a lawyer of high reputation and very extensive practice in the  
City of Williamsburg.

This gentleman was very much attached (as was quite  
natural) to his promising young nephew, and devoted more than  
the customary attention to the direction of his legal studies.  
Under such favourable auspices, Henry Tazewell advanced rapidly  
and in December 1773. he obtained a licence to practice. He had  
then just entered upon his twenty first year; but the law then in  
force did not require the applicant for a licence to be of age.  
His licence was granted by John Randolph the Attorney  
General and by George Wythe esq: each of them filling a high  
place at the bar of the old General Court, by which Court  
they had been appointed examiners, in pursuance of the Act  
of Assembly, upon this subject, then in force.

While residing in Williamsburg, as a student of law, Henry  
Tazewell had become attached to Dorothy Elizabeth <sup>Waller</sup>  
one of the daughters of Benjamin Waller esquire of that  
This attachment had been reciprocated on her part, and met  
the full approbation of all their friends. Their marriage was  
postponed only to allow him an opportunity of completing his  
professional studies and of obtaining a licence to practice.  
This being granted him, they were married in January 17,

Soon after his marriage, Henry Tazewell removed to the County  
of Brunswick, and established himself on his paternal estate  
on the Otterdam swamp. Having settled himself, he immediately  
commenced the practice of the law in the Counties of Brunswick  
Southampton, Sussex and Surry. His commencement was made  
under most flattering prospects, far exceeding his expectations  
and fully equal to his most sanguine wishes. But this bright  
dawn was soon obscured by unexpected events, over which  
he had no controul.

Many years before the period of which I am now

ing, the fees of the different Officers of the Government had been regulated by an Act of Assembly that prescribed the mode in which these fees might be collected. It had long been the custom to make this a temporary Act, and to renew it from time to time when it was about to expire. The last Act of Assembly upon this subject, was passed in February 1772. It declared that it should continue and be in force from and after "the twelfth day of April next (when the preceding Act would expire) for and during the term of two years, and no longer." The Assembly which met in 1774, was suddenly dissolved by the Governor, Lord Dunmore, before <sup>an</sup> the Act for renewing the Fee Bill, as it was called, could be passed. In consequence of which, the Act 1772 expired, according to its own limitation.

At first, this circumstance does not seem to have been generally noticed, or if observed to have produced any effect, for such had occurred before without being productive of any mischief or inconvenience. At length, however, some distinguished persons expressed an opinion that during the suspension of the Fee Bill the Courts of Justice ought not to proceed to the trial of any of the cases depending before them. This opinion, it is probable, was rather the result of what they thought would be highly expedient, than of any conviction of what the law required. The condition of the Colony, at that time, was awfully perilous; and nothing seemed to promise any relief, but the convention of the Assembly. A measure to which the Governor was known to be much opposed. To compel him to convene an Assembly, no means seemed to be so efficacious as the occlusion of the Courts of Justice, for a cause which none but the Assembly could remove. Besides, the storm of the Revolution was obviously approaching fast, and it was thought highly inexpedient, at such a juncture, to suffer the people to be harassed by the demands of their creditors, the greater part of whom were British merchants.

These opinions, were for some time confined to the leading men only. At length, however, they were generally disseminated; and as they spread into the country, they were adopted and acted upon by the

all of whom,  
Magistrates of the different County Courts, ~~who~~ by the  
year 1775, had refused to go upon their docket, before the  
had sanctioned ~~such a~~ this, by their course. Thus  
the Counties in which Henry Tazewell practiced, were ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~much~~  
closed for the transaction of business, within very little more than  
year after he had begun to practice the law.

In the spring of the year 1775, Lord North's conciliatory  
as it was called, for restoring quiet to the Colonies, was commu-  
nicated by the British Ministry to all the Colonial Governors in America.  
Upon the receipt of this communication, Lord Dunmore, the Gov-  
ernor of Virginia, determined to convene an Assembly, to which the  
plan might be submitted. For that purpose, he ordered writs to issue  
for holding elections of members of the Assembly, which body he  
required to convene in Williamsburg, the seat of Government,  
the first day of June 1775.

At this election, Henry Tazewell became a candidate to  
represent the County of Brunswick, in which he then resided.  
He was opposed by the two old members, who had represented the  
County for several years, and who were endeared to the people by  
the course they had pursued as members of the preceding Assembly  
1774. But such was the popularity he had acquired, that although he  
was then quite young, (only in his twenty second year,) and had  
resided in the County but little more than twelve months, he was  
elected as one of its delegates, beating Colonel Daniel Fisher, one of  
the delegates.

Page 51  
In April 1775 the gun powder was secretly removed from the public magazine  
at Williamsburg by order of Lord Dunmore the Governor. In consequence of this  
Henry at the head of a body of men from Hanover marched down toward  
Williamsburg and having compelled Col. Corbin the Receiver general of  
revenue in this colony to pay the amount of the supposed value of the  
retired again to their homes. This is the first act of open resistance  
authority in Virginia produced much excitement among the people.  
Lord North's conciliatory plan (as it was called) arriving  
about this time. To appease this excitement and to  
this plan, if possible, the Governor Dunmore called a me-

the region commenced the governor being alarmed retired from his palace  
being on board a man of war then lying in the river opposite York town  
intercourse between the Executive and Legislative branches of the government  
being then cut off the Assembly could proceed no further in its business and therefore  
adjourned to meet on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October following. A sufficient number to form a  
quorum not meeting on that day those who did meet adjourned to Dorchester 7<sup>th</sup> 1776.  
On that day also a quorum not appearing the numbers present adjourned to meet again  
on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1776. On this day however the Convention (composed of the same persons)  
was also convened and when several of the members of the Assembly met on that  
they would "neither proceed to business nor adjourn as a house of Burgesses" and thus  
terminated the political existence of the last Virginia assembly held under the royal  
government.

After the adjournment of the Assembly as such in June 1775 the members (who were also  
delegates to the Convention) agreed to meet in Richmond as a Convention on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
of July following. This body accordingly assembled at that time and place and made  
the necessary preparations for resisting the royal forces under the governor who was still  
in the colony at Norfolk. A military force was created and organized and a  
temporary executive established called the Committee of Safety and having completed  
the arrangements the Convention ~~was~~ adjourned to meet again at the same place on  
the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1775.

On that day the Convention again assembled and having made some further  
ordinances necessary for the good of the colony dissolved themselves. In April  
1776 a new election of delegates to the Convention took place under an ordinance  
which had been adopted by that body in 1775. The new members then <sup>elected</sup> assembled  
in Williamsburg on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1776: when the old assembly being terminated  
as I have before stated the state of the colony at that time requiring the  
establishment of some more permanent form of government on the 15<sup>th</sup> of  
May a committee was appointed to prepare such a form of government as would  
be most likely to maintain peace and order in this colony and secure  
substantial and equal liberty to the people. The committee reported this  
present constitution of Virginia which was unanimously adopted by  
the Convention on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July following the Congress  
of the United States declared these colonies "free and independent," thus terminated the  
connection between Great Britain and this her most an-  
naly her most loyal colony. At the commencement of the



30  
prosecuting his professional course. In this situation he raised a troop of Cavalry in the Co. of Brunswick (where he resided) under the recommendation of the Convention of March 11, and was made its Captain. With this body he afterwards marched to Williamsburg, but the organization of the forces adopted by the Convention, providing a more permanent force, this with all the other volunteers were then discharged.

In April 1775 an election of the members of the Assembly (which as I have stated was summoned by the Governor to meet the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June) was to take place. The members chosen at this election would also be delegates to the Convention according to the ordinance of the last Convention upon this subject. This election therefore was one of great interest, and Henry Tazewell declared himself a candidate for his County. The County of Brunswick was then very large and he had not resided in it more than twelve months. The old members were both men of influence had long represented it and were moreover endeared to the people by the course they had pursued during the sessions of the Convention, and of the Assembly in the preceding year. Yet such was the standing he had acquired in the County during his short residence there, that he was elected after a severe contest. He then was but little more than twenty one years of age.

When the Assembly met (which as I have stated was the last held under the regal government) Henry Tazewell altho' a very young man and a new member took an active part with those who were not disposed to press matters to extremity but to adopt some conciliatory course that might leave open the door of reconciliation between the colony and her parent state and terminate the differences then unhappily subsisting and restore tranquility to the agitated country. In this course he was supported by some of the warmest and truest patriots in the Assembly, by Nicholas, Pendleton, Bland, Harrison &c. but were opposed by Henry the Lees, Page and Jefferson.

An anecdote I have very frequently heard related, will shew, that the course then pursued by Henry Tazewell, was much disapproved of by the latter gentleman particularly. During this session of the Assembly Mr Tazewell prepared a set of resolutions expressive of his own opinions and of the plan which ought to be adopted. These Resolutions he designed to offer upon some fit occasion; and in the mean time was solicitous to submit them to the examination of those for whose opinions he felt the most respect. Mr Nicholas had seen and approved them and upon some occasion while Mr Tazewell was exhibiting his paper to another gentleman, a Mr Lyne another member from King and Queen, passing by at times either looked over their shoulders and read it or

1775 there was probably not a single man in the whole colony who had ever thought of resistance and certainly not one who wished a separation. The harsh measures adopted by the mistaken councils of the mother country excited irritation and resentment but these might have been soon quieted and appeased if prudent plans had been adopted. Unfortunately for Great Britain however she selected as governors for her colonies a set of men probably the most unfit of any that could have been found at such a critical juncture. The follies and indiscretions of these men precipitated measures that a little discretion would easily have averted and changed mere irritation and temporary resentment into fixed and settled purpose to obtain even though arms must be resorted to as the only means of insuring success. Still though separation was not desired even the necessity of a resort to arms was deplored by those prepared to use them as much as by those who thought such a resort unnecessary and some of the best patriots in this country were warmly opposed to the organization of a military force adopted by the Convention in July 1775. The abandonment of his government in June 1775 produced the necessity for organizing a provisional government for the country; and the base barbarous and infamous course he pursued compelled the employment of the force that had then been provided for defence merely. The opposing forces first met in Virginia in December 1775 and at the battle of the Great Bridge the first blood was spilt. Their success in this first encounter gave confidence to the colonists and prepared them for the war. This however could not be carried on with the temporary government then existing; of course a new government was necessarily created; and thus <sup>their</sup> independence was almost forced upon a people who began the struggle with feelings as loyal as subjects had, and were driven by wicked misrule to assert as rights what they would then have been much better pleased to have enjoyed from the indulgent kindness of the mother country.

It is not my purpose to write the history of the nation but merely that of a single family. To this therefore let me return. The act under which most of the legal fees in Virginia were demandable, was but a temporary statute, and was limited in its duration to the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1774, by the last statute passed upon the subject in February 1772. ~~was~~ The Assembly which met in May 1774 would have continued this act longer no doubt but that body being suddenly dissolved by the governor in May 1774 as I have stated, the consequence was, the fee bill not being then continued expired of course, and thus the Court of justice in the country were closed.

Henry Tazewell who had just before this commenced the practice of the law as I have said was thus deprived almost entirely of all opportunity of

or heard it read by one of them. I got either an  
did not approve of the resolutions and immediately communicated to Mr Jefferson  
what he conceived to be the object of this paper, by whom it was prepared and how it was  
proposed to employ it Mr Jefferson when the house met, took occasion in an  
address he was making to denounce as enemies all those who contemplated  
proposing any measures calculated to paralyze the efforts the house was then  
making or to impede its course; and stating that he was informed such a plan was then  
in contemplation, he therefore bade the young gentleman who projected such a course to  
reflect upon it calmly and beware its consequences. The remarks naturally produced  
enquiry as to the person to whom they were intended to apply and Mr Jaywell having  
been designated as that person, he rose in his place and avowed himself to be the  
young member who had contemplated proposing a set of measures that his judgement  
approved and which he hoped the house would adopt whether this was the  
result or not however, he should do what he believed to be his duty  
by exhibiting these proposed measures at the proper time; and that he should  
not be deterred from the performance of this duty by such denunciations  
as the house had heard addressed to him. Some warm discussion was  
produced by these circumstances and the house adjourned under great  
excitement. At the adjournment many members became desirous to see the  
proposed Resolutions which had yet been publicly exhibited and Mr Jaywell  
very willing to show them to all who wished to see them. By some they were  
highly approved of, and by these a desire was expressed that they should  
be proposed the next day. To others the objects and sentiments of the  
resolutions were also agreeable but they did not consider the present  
as the fit occasion for presenting them. And by others again they were  
disapproved entirely. Even this latter class however while they disapproved  
of the resolutions, were highly incensed at the course which Mr Jefferson  
those who acted with him pursued. They considered this as highly im-  
calculated to <sup>suppress</sup> ~~destroy~~ all freedom of deliberation and to stifle a  
measures which certain members might not choose to approve. Such  
therefore, while they were opposed to the resolutions, concurred with Mr  
approved them entirely, in the desire that should be proposed the next  
in order that while they opposed the resolutions themselves they might  
an opportunity of expressing their respect and regard for those who might  
them, and their indignation at the course pursued by Mr Jefferson and his

my subject. This gentleman was an old member, known  
to be the firmest and most zealous whigs in the country and when roused  
was apt to be very violent and implacable. He took occasion in the course  
of the evening to let those with whom he usually acted distinctly understand  
that the resolutions would be proposed the next day and altho' he was opposed  
to them himself, yet he highly respected all those who would support them,  
and was prepared to censure in the strongest terms, all or any who should  
make such an attempt as he had witnessed that day. An attempt which  
he regarded as more dangerous to the liberties of the people than any they were  
then opposing, inasmuch, as its necessary effect was, to prevent all freedom  
of deliberation, and to submit the direction of all matters, to the dictation  
of a few leading men. The conversations which took place between many different  
members during the course of this evening indicated very plainly the debate that the  
debate the next day would be renewed with more warmth on the next. To prevent  
this Robert Carter Nicholas esq: who had seen the resolutions and had approved  
them, but didn't wish them brought forward, applied to Henry Tajewell early the  
next morning to lend him the paper. This application was readily granted: and  
Mr Nicholas being thus in possession of the paper, carried it to Mr Jefferson for his  
perusal, stating to him at the same time what he had heard would be the  
course pursued that day. The perusal of the document satisfied this gentleman that  
it had been <sup>mis</sup>represented and the remarks of Mr Nicholas convinced him that his  
conduct on the preceding day was alike unwarrantable and unwise. These opinions  
he expressed very frankly to Mr Nicholas and authorized him to express the regret  
Mr Jefferson felt at what had occurred. Both these gentlemen while they differed  
as to the opinion expressed in the resolutions concurred in thinking that was  
not the proper time to announce it. Mr Jefferson therefore readily prevailed upon  
Mr Nicholas to use his influence with the author not to press them at that time  
this the <sup>latter</sup> ~~author~~ had no difficulty in effecting, for the author had not intended  
originally to bring the resolutions forward ~~at~~ that occasion; and was stimula-  
ted to change this purpose, merely by the irritation produced by what had occurred,  
and the persuasions of some of his friends who had become highly excited by  
the same cause. This irritation and excitement being appeased however by the frank  
acknowledgements of Mr Jefferson Henry Tajewell very willingly acquiesced in  
the advice of his worthy friend Mr Nicholas and readily agreed to postpone  
his plan to a more fit occasion. The conduct of Lord Dunmore by confining

9

condonation of it own rights, during the residue of its short session which he soon precipitated to close, allowed no opportunity for reviving the subject, and the resolutions prepared were never after proposed.

This occurrence I am induced to believe produced the best effects. It taught those who were disposed to be violent, and of this description there were then several members in the house, that such a course was neither calculated to produce harmony or secure success; and inspired the majority with sentiments of deference and respect for the minority which never afterwards were altered.

This circumstance alluded to produced no lasting impression upon the opinions of either Mr. Jefferson or Henry Tazewell of each other. They became after this very intimate friends and their friendship continued without further interruption until the death of the latter.

Since that event I have received many letters from Mr. Jefferson expressive of the warmest attachment to his departed friend and kind offers to myself as his son.

This assembly adjourned the latter part of June 1775. Previously to their separation however the members (as I have before stated) agreed to meet in Convention on 17<sup>th</sup> of July following at Richmond. Thither therefore Henry Tazewell repaired, and took his seat as a member of that body. At this session Patrick Henry brought forward his great proposition for "raising and embodying a sufficient force for the defence and defense protection of the Colony." The force proposed was only two regiments; but this was then deemed adequate to defend and protect the country against the attempts of the abdicated governor, this was the only enemy Virginia had to apprehend at that time. A committee of safety was also created, to discharge executive functions which the governor had renounced. And after providing for a new election of members to their own body to be made in the following April; and passing some other ordinances of less importance, the Convention adjourned to meet again at the same place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1775.

Before this period arrived there had been several skirmishes between Dunmore's motley forces and the militia of the Colony in which some blood had been spilt, and during the session of the Convention the more sanguinary conflict at the Great-Bridge had taken place, and the burning of Norfolk had <sup>occurred</sup> taken place. Every thing therefore manifested the necessity of organizing additional forces: and hence seven new regiments were created; a mode of appointing sheriffs was also devised; and a Tribunal erected for the trying offenders, and particularly the enemies of the country. This Convention during its session adjourned from Rich.

to Williamsburg in order to be nearer the scene of conflict, and after dispatching its business dissolved itself. - All the proceedings of this body during each of its sessions were such a good of the country imperiously demanded, the most absolute unanimity therefore prevailed amongst its members, and no diversity of thought or of sentiment existed as to the expediency of any of its ordinances.

In April 1776 a new election of delegates to the Convention took place in conformity to the ordinance of July 1775. At this election Henry St. John was again elected as one of the delegates to represent the County of Brunswick; and repaired to Williamsburg where the Convention on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1776

Before this body convened the situation of the country had become obviously such, that all concurred in the opinion, some better and more permanent government was necessary than what then existed. The acts of the different revolutionary tribunals then existing throughout the whole country, although sustained by the opinion of the people yet wanted the sanction of law. A legislature endowed with plenary ~~power~~ legislative powers was therefore indispensable; not only for this reason, but to provide the necessary ways and means of calling forth the resources of the country to carry on the conflict in which it was then engaged. The committee of the only executive then existing, was too numerous to possess either that unity of purpose, or that promptitude of decision and action, which military, above all others most require. Hence the people loudly called for a new government; and the members chosen to this Convention were every where elected under the expectation that a new government would be established by them. Soon after the meeting of this body therefore on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1776 it was resolved that "a committee be appointed to prepare a declaration of Rights, "and such a plan of government as will be most likely to maintain peace "and order in this Colony, and secure substantial and equal liberty to the "people. Such a committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of the most distinguished members and esteemed patriots in Virginia the Convention. Amongst these the names of Dr. Archibald Cary, Dr. James Mercer, Dr. Robert Carter Nicholas, Dr. Patrick Henry, Dr. Bartholomew Dandridge, Dr. Richard Bland, Dr. Paul Carrington, Dr. Thomas Ludwell Lee, Dr. Geo. Blair, Dr. William Fleming, Dr. John Bannister, Dr. Evans Page, Dr. James Madison, Dr. George Mason among several others, are still remembered with high veneration; and of this committee Henry St. John was one of the members. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1776 the declaration of rights and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the same month the present plan of government were reported by this committee and adopted without a dissenting voice on those days respectively.



70  
been were fully realized for a time at least. Business flowed in upon him from every quarter and he soon stood at the head of his profession dividing its highest emoluments with his friend Edmund Randolph. These halcyon days were not of long continuance however the frequent invasions of the country by the enemy during the years 1779, 1780, and 1781, produced the necessity of frequently closing the Courts of Justice; and the perils impending near Williamsburg induced the Assembly in the year 1779, to remove the seat of government from thence to Richmond. The bright prospects of Henry Tazewell to attain wealth and eminence in his profession were thus suspended by these events; and not knowing what to do with himself, he sold off the property he had purchased upon his removal to Williamsburg and for some years led an unsettled and vagrant life, passing his time occasionally in Greenville at his plantation there and at other times attending his Courts when they would be opened for a season. In this state he knew not what to do, or where to fix himself and being constantly exposed to the infection of the small pox, which the British armies had brought with them, and spread throughout the country

he submitted to inoculation for this disease. He had the small pox most dreadfully indeed and it was several years before his constitution recovered from the shock so inflicted upon it. To add to his misfortunes, the British army under Lord Cornwallis in its march from the more southern states into Virginia, in the year 1781, passed the Meherrin at Hick's ford, very near the estate of Henry Tazewell, and while there plundered him of many slaves and much other property, so that when the war terminated in 1783 he found himself in no better circumstances than he had been when he began the world in 1774.

The capture of Cornwallis at York on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1781, terminated the war which had raged so fiercely in Virginia for some time previously to that event. And the presence of the French army which remained in Williamsburg during the winter of 1781-2 and part of the succeeding spring, inspiring the people with perfect confidence in their security, restored tranquillity and invited the resumption of regular pursuits - Henry Tazewell availed himself of the first gleam of the first gleam of the approaching sunshine, to reestablish himself somewhere, and to recommence his professional labors. Williamsburg was the spot where most of his early friends resided, where he had first begun his harvest of professional emolument, and to which some interrupted and unfinished legal engagements again called him. It was here therefore that he again fixed his abode and from hence he attended the supreme and superior Courts which sat in Richmond, and the Court of Admiralty that notwithstanding the removal of the seat of government still continued to hold its sittings in Williamsburg.



Altho' after the conclusion of the war, the bars of the different courts, were attended by more and more distinguished counsellors, than had appeared there when Henry Tazewell had first taken his stand at these bars, yet he soon rose above these competitors to his former rank. His business was inferior to that of none, save only the Attorney general Randolph and in its profits parts exceeded even his. And he continued to maintain this high standing ever afterwards, while he remained in practice. During this period the leading counsellors besides those I have mentioned were, Jermain Baker from Petersburg, Colonel John Taylor of Caroline, Thomson Mason, Charles Lee, John Francis Mercer now of Maryland, Samuel Hardy, Andrew Ronald, John Marshall, now Chief Justice of the United States, Colonel James Innes afterwards Attorney general, and occasionally Patrick Henry, with many others not now recollected. Many of these either then were, or very soon became the most eminent lawyers in the United States. To have acquired and maintained such a rank as he held amongst such competitors and especially with such judges as Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Lyons, and Waller, who then presided in these courts, is sufficient evidence of the legal acquirements of Henry Tazewell.

Soon after his second establishment in Williamsburg, Henry Tazewell was unanimously elected by its citizens a member of the Assembly from that City; and continued to represent it ever afterwards without opposition so long as he was eligible to that body. In this situation and while he was in the mid career of his professional course, the death of the honourable Bartholomew Dandridge one of the Judges of the General Court, occasioning a vacancy in that Court, Henry Tazewell was prevailed upon by his friends and particularly by the solicitations of Patrick Henry, esp. the then governor of Virginia, to accept this appointment. He was accordingly commissioned by the executive in the summer of <sup>1785.</sup> ~~1785.~~ and this appointment was confirmed unanimously by the Assembly, at the October session in this year. At this time he was not yet two and thirty years of age. + In the year 1787. the Convention which had met in Philadelphia for the purpose of revising the existing federal system, produced the present Constitution of the United States, as the result of the combined wisdom of America. By one of the resolutions of this Convention, the proposed constitution was to be laid before Congress, and afterwards to be submitted to a Convention of delegates in each State to be chosen by the people thereof and the recommendation of its Legislature, for their assent and ratification. In consequence of this the Legislature at their October session 1787. had passed an act directing the manner in which these delegates should be chosen, and that they should meet in Richmond. Under this in all restrictions of qualifications.

delegates were removed and any of the judicial or executive officers of the government were eligible. The agitation produced by the examination of the important question now presented the decision of which was supposed to involve the  <sup>fate of the</sup> Union had had been equal'd by nothing but that occasioned by the first great question of resistance. The friends and enemies to the adoption of this new Constitution were distinguished as Federalists and Antifederalists were equally zealous and active in their exertions to promote the success of their respective wishes. The Governors and of the Judges of the superior Courts, members of Congress and all others of the most distinction in the State were candidates for seats in this Convention: but Henry Tazewell was not there. He resided at this time in Williamsburg, and in that part of it, which was in the County of York, from one or the other of which places of course he must be elected if he was chosen at all. His intimate friend Colonel James Dornie who had succeeded him as the member of Assembly from Williamsburg; when he was elected to the bench had already announced himself as a Candidate for the Convention also from that town. And in York his old friends Generals Thomas Nelson and W. Prentis (afterwards Judge Prentis) who had long represented that country in the Assembly, presented themselves in like manner as solicitors for seats in the Convention. To all and each of these gentlemen Judge Tazewell was opposed in opinion upon the great question then agitating, he being opposed to the adoption of the proposed Constitution, while they were in favor of it. The majority of the people in Williamsburg and York were Federalists, and altho' the popularity of Judge Tazewell at this time was such, that had he offered'd, the contest between him and any of the others would <sup>probably have been</sup> most sharp and doubtful, yet such a contest would necessarily have brought him into warm conflict with old friends whom he sincerely regarded, and who already were incumbents or were in the offices to which they again wished to be appointed. In such circumstances he refused to become a candidate for either place, and uniformly resisted all applications to him upon that subject, invariably declaring, that no consideration should induce him, voluntarily to oppose himself to those friends whom he prized and esteemed so highly.

While this subject is before me, my recollection is called to an incident that occurred at the York election, alike honorable to all concerned in it, which I will state. After Judge Tazewell refused to become a candidate for this County, the Antifederalists put up two persons by the name of Shield opponents to General Nelson and W. Prentis for the Convention.

election was about to commence (and it was expected to be a very closely contested one), the poll keepers had already prepared their polls, headed with the names of these four candidates; these gentlemen had already taken their seats on the bench, as is customary, and the proclamation had already been made by the sheriff, inviting the freeholders to come forward and vote; at this juncture an old man by the name of Charles Lewis, stepped forward, and addressing himself to General Nelson and Mr Prentis remarked, that he had always voted for them as they would recollect, and that he had never found any cause to regret his votes: that he had left home that morning with intent to vote for him again; but on his way to the court house he had reflected, that his vote this day, would not be reflective of his confidence in these gentlemen, so much as of a wish that the proposed Constitution should be adopted - In this situation he had examined this instrument, upon the adoption or rejection of which he was thus called on to decide, so far as his single suffrage would go; but that all his examination had not satisfied him what opinion he ought to express upon this subject. That having no opinion himself upon this question it had occurred to him as improper to express one, by voting in favour of any of the candidates, who had already formed and declared a decided resolution as to the course they should pursue if elected: For his part, wanting information as he did, he could not reconcile it to himself, to vote for any ~~one~~ to who having decided already, further information would be of no advantage. That if the question was, <sup>in accord</sup> would depute for him to decide unknown and unforeseen matters, he would unquestionably vote for the persons to whom he addressed himself; for as to such subjects, their minds were as impartial as his own, and he had unlimited confidence (which experience had taught him was well merited) in their judgements, when exercised with such impartiality. But as there was now a single and a known proposition to be settled, which all concurred in considering, as the most important of any that had ever come before the people, since the question of Independence, he thought it wrong to prejudge such a question, when it had not been fully examined. Hence, he had made up his mind, to vote in favour of persons who so far as he knew had formed no opinion as yet, who were still open to conviction, and unpledged to support any side, and who should be well qualified to determine wisely, what they were prepared to examine impartially. These reflections had called to his recollection his two fellow citizens George Wythe, and <sup>John</sup> James Blair; and he hoped his friends would excuse him, if upon this occasion he directed the sheriff to record his vote in favour of these distinguished patriots, whose age and retirement by keeping them aloof from the warm conflict that had been

18  
carrying on, had them still to be impartial, and whose long experience, and well approved  
past services, while they gave assurance of their wisdom, also preferred strong claims  
to the gratitude of their country. Scarcely were these words uttered by Lewis, when  
General Nelson, springing from the bench, where he had taken a seat advanced to him,  
and, seizing him by the hand, thanked him in the warmest terms for what he had  
said and done; adding that though Dr Lewis had got the start of him in the  
good race then to be run, he would suffer no other man to precede him in the  
support of Dr Wythe and Dr Blair, whose merit none knew better than himself.  
He therefore directed the sheriff to record his vote in favour of these gentlemen  
and soliciting all those who might have come to the Court-house intending to vote  
for him, not to consider him a candidate, but to follow his example in  
supporting these persons. Dr Paentis soon followed General Nelson in this  
course, and Dr Wythe and Dr Blair were elected by a unanimous vote. When the  
election was over, General Nelson addressing the people observed that as they had elected  
these gentlemen without their knowledge, it would be well to complete they had so  
begun, and to secure the approbation of the persons elected, and their consent  
to serve. He therefore proposed, that they should proceed in a body from York  
to Williamsburg, and be themselves the bearers of their own requests that  
the persons elected would accept their appointments. This proposition  
was carried by acclamation; and General Nelson placing himself at the  
head of his fellow-citizens, they moved in procession to Williamsburg, where  
upon their arrival they ranged themselves quietly in front of Dr Wythe's  
house, and deputed their spokesman, he presented himself in  
their behalf to the old man, and announced what had occurred what  
had occurred. X When General Nelson entered the room, I was reciting a  
Greek lesson to Dr Wythe, and never shall I forget the countenances of  
these two great men upon this occasion. — That of General Nelson was  
lighted up with the <sup>satisfaction which the</sup> consciousness of having willingly done a good deed  
never fails to inspire. His address was short and rapid, for his utterance  
was always quick. He remarked to Dr Wythe, that altho' he had not  
expected to have seen him at the election that day, yet he regretted that he  
had not been there, for he would have seen exemplified very strongly the  
truth of a sentiment the conviction of a sentiment, which his whole life  
had manifested sufficiently, that the people were their own best governors.  
"True to this maxim the freeholders of York county, have this day unanimously  
elected you sir as one of their representatives in the next Convention. And